



Monster

By Walter Dean Myers

Teacher's Guide

Written By Mary Ellen Snodgrass

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Synopsis

Introduction

A young prisoner describes the terror of beatings by inmates on other prisoners. He is scared and cries at night.

Monday, July 6

Steve Harmon describes his life in Cell Block D of the Manhattan Detention Center as though it were a movie. His attorney, Kathy O'Brien, questions him about the felony murder, for which prosecutor Sandra Petrocelli, an assistant district attorney for the state of New York, presses for the death penalty. While dressing for a court appearance, he rejects breakfast. O'Brien does not indicate her hope of acquittal.

Handcuffed to a bench, Steve observes the bored judge. Steve flashes back to a film workshop at Stuyvesant High School and the club mentor, George Sawicki. Petrocelli informs the jury that teen killers are monsters and describes the robbery and murder of Alguinaldo Nesbitt at his drugstore on 145th Street in Harlem on December 22 the previous year at 4:00 P. M. She charges Steve with being the lookout for the thief, James King. O'Brien introduces her defense with a reminder of reasonable doubt of Steve's complicity in the crime.

José Delgado, a drugstore employee, testifies that, on the day of the crime, he left around 4:35 P. M. for dinner and returned to find Nesbitt dead and five cartons of cigarettes stolen. A second witness, Salvatore Zinzi, reports that he was incarcerated at Riker's Island when he heard Wendell Bolden claim

to know who committed the crime. Zinzi called Detective Gluck and confides that Bolden got two cartons of the stolen cigarettes. O'Brien discredits the information as a means for Zinzi to get out of jail early.

In a flashback, Steve recalls walking with Tony in the park four years earlier. After throwing a rock and hitting a young woman, Steve implicates Tony. The woman's companion hits Tony, who wants an uzi to avenge himself for the false accusation.

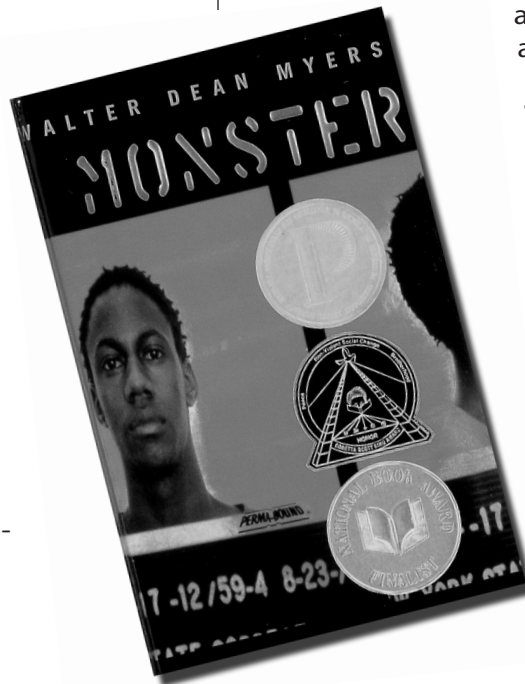
Tuesday, July 7

Bolden admits being arrested for intending to deal dope and explains that he got cigarettes on December 24 from Bobo Evans, who helped rob the drugstore on Malcolm X Boulevard. A flashback pictures Steve and James King at a porch on 141st Street with Peaches and Johnny, who consider a "getover" against an illegal alien. After Briggs discredits Bolden's testimony, the judge adjourns. That night, Steve hears a sexual

attack on an inmate. A flashback shows Steve and his 11-year-old brother Jerry discussing superheroes.

Wednesday, July 8

Steve lets Sunset read his screenplay and receives a visit from a preacher in the afternoon. Steve wants to feel like a good person. In court, Detective Karyl presents photos of the crime scene. He admits that he found no fingerprints, but received a tip from Sal Zinzi that Bolden knew Evans and King committed the crime. A flashback shows Karyl questioning Steve and implying that he was the trigger man. Officer Williams predicts a sentence of



life without parole. Steve fantasizes about being prepared for execution on death row.

Steve recalls a conversation with 14-year-old Osvaldo Cruz and Freddy Alou. Osvaldo accuses Steve of needing to make a name for himself by acting tough. Osvaldo testifies that Bobo cut a man in the projects. He also claims to have taken part in the crime because he was afraid of King, Evans, and Steve.

Thursday, July 9

Steve worries that his lawyer is losing hope of winning. He knows that she is from Queens and went to New York University Law School. King asks Steve if he is making a deal with prosecutors. O'Brien upbraids Steve for putting his head down in a gesture of despair. Osvaldo testifies that Steve was the lookout. O'Brien questions him about his membership in the Diablos.

At the detention center, Mr. Harmon visits his son. He comforts him, but leaves sobbing. Steve recalls hearing women discuss the victim, who immigrated to the United States from St. Kitts. A neighbor reports that a little girl was murdered two months before Nesbitt's death. While Steve watches the news, Karyl and Williams arrive to take him to the 28th precinct headquarters for questioning. Steve's mother tries to follow.

Friday, July 10

Steve ponders how Petrocelli kept showing the photos to leave a bad image in the jurors' minds. He mops the corridors with disinfectant and gags from the smell. He blames himself for wanting to be tough like King and Evans. City Clerk Allen Forbes testifies that Nesbitt got a gun permit in August 1989. Williams reports viewing the crime scene at 5:15 and receiving Evans' admission of guilt. Dr. James Moody, the medical examiner, testifies that Nesbitt drowned in his own blood.

Saturday, July 11

Steve acknowledges that O'Brien ordered him not to write anything in his notebook that he didn't want Petrocelli to see. He thinks about spending twenty years in jail and about his mother's visit. She brings a *Bible* with a passage marked and assures him she knows he is innocent. Steve recalls how King planned the robbery and asked him to be lookout.

Sunday, July 12

At 1:15 P. M., Steve sees Jerry and his parents in the street below. Steve anticipates testimony by the state's star witnesses on Monday.

Monday, July 13

Petrocelli calls Lorelle Henry, a retired school librarian who witnessed the crime. She picked out King's picture from over 20 police photos and identified him in a lineup. Briggs complains to the judge that Evans arrives in court in a prison uniform from Greenhaven, where he is serving time for drug dealing. Evans claims that Steve was the lookout, but that Evans and King split the cash without sharing with Steve. Evans admits selling stolen cigarettes to Bolden.

Tuesday, July 14

O'Brien visits Steve to tell him that Evans' testimony hurt their case. In court, Dorothy Moore, King's cousin, reports that he came to her house to give her a lamp at 3:30 P. M. the day of the robbery. George Nipping testifies that King is left-handed, a weak retort to the fact that Nesbitt was shot on the left side, ostensibly by a right-handed shooter.

O'Brien sets up a signal with a cup to indicate how well Steve is testifying. Steve testifies that he wasn't a lookout and that he didn't enter the drug-store. He explains that he spent the day taking mental notes for a school film project. George Sawicki states that he has known Steve for three years and that the boy is honest. Briggs concludes that no witness saw the murder. O'Brien adds that there is no proof that Steve served as lookout. The judge outlines to jurors the process of returning a verdict of guilty to felony murder. A guard confides that there is a pool on the outcome of the trial.

Friday, July 17

The court awaits the arrival of the Nesbitt family. King is found guilty; Steve is exonerated. O'Brien recoils from his embrace.

December

James King begins serving 25 years to life. Osvaldo goes to a reformatory; Evans is in jail. Steve continues making films, but worries that his father distances himself because he disapproves of Steve's friendships with criminals. Steve worries about O'Brien's opinion of him.

Timeline

- 1989** Alguinaldo Nesbitt gets a gun permit.
- four years earlier** Steve hits a woman with a rock and implicates Tony.
- ca. Oct.22 before the robbery** Killers murder a little girl in Harlem.
- later** Steve and James King confer with Peaches and Johnny on a getover.
- Dec. 22** Two robbers murder Alguinaldo Nesbitt at his drugstore.
- later** Detective Karyl apprehends and questions Steve.
- Dec. 24** Wendell Bolden gets cigarettes from Bobo Evans.
- July 6** Steve describes life in the Manhattan Detention Center as though it were a movie.
- July 7** Bolden testifies about how he got the cigarettes.
- July 8** Detective Karyl presents photos of the crime scene.
- July 9** Steve worries that his lawyer is losing hope of winning.
- later** Mr. Harmon visits his son.
- July 10** Steve blames himself for wanting to be tough like King and Evans.
- July 11** Mrs. Harmon brings Steve a Bible.
- July 12** Steve sees Jerry and his parents in the street below.
- July 13** Lorelle Henry testifies that she witnessed King commit the crime. Evans claims that Steve was the lookout.
- July 14** Steve testifies that he wasn't a lookout and that he didn't enter the drugstore.
- July 17** Steve is found not guilty.

Author Sketch

Born August 12, 1937, in Martinsburg, West Virginia, Walter Milton Myers, the grandson of a slave and great-grandson of a woman owned by the prestigious Dandrighes of Virginia, was the son of George Ambrose and Mary Green Myers. Mary Myers died giving birth to a daughter, Imogene. George Myers was hard pressed to care for eight children, including Gertrude, Viola, Ethel, Geraldine, Douglas, and George, Jr., and passed Myers and two of his sisters into the care of family friends, Herbert Julius Dean, a shipping clerk and



stevedore, and factory worker Florence Dean, who lived in Harlem. This family provided well for Myers, teaching him to read at age five.

Myers recalls a strong bond with Harlem, where he attended church and school and played stoopball and Chinese handball with his pals. His speech problems dissipated after he began reading children's classics and writing his own versions. He excelled in language studies, yet hated prejudicial treatment of colored children, a situation that alienated him from Eric, his best friend. After discarding early ambitions to join one of the professions, Myers worked for a jewelry distributor, read voraciously from sophisticated classics suggested by his teacher, and began to write short stories on his used Royal typewriter.

At age 17, Myers joined the army and studied radio repair. In 1957, he settled in Morristown, New Jersey, worked in a factory, and read Camus, Sartre, Nietzsche, and Gide. Boredom drove him back to Harlem, where he lived the idealized "starving artist" motif in the Cort Hotel. He entered City University of New York and completed a B. A. from Empire State College. After landing a job as a postal clerk in 1959, he married and sired daughter Karen Elaine and son Walter Dean. While playing percussion in a band and hanging out with heavy drug users, Myers published verse and stories in *Negro Digest*, *Black World*, and *The Liberator*.

Irreconcilable differences ended Myers' marriage. He left his work as an interviewer and employment supervisor for the State of New York and from 1970 to 1977 worked as senior trade book editor at Bobbs-Merrill. In 1971, he altered his middle name to Dean. With second wife Constance Brendell Myers, he fathered a second son, Christopher, and published his first young adult novel, first nonfiction, and short pieces in men's magazines, *McCall's*, *Sunday News Magazine*, and *Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine*. His success with white audiences led to serious doubts about his aim and purpose; to add to his insecurities, in 1977 he was fired from Bobbs-Merrill. On a spiritual quest to Hong Kong, Myers determined to return home to Jersey City and write full-time and teach creative writing and black history. His outpouring of biography and coming-of-age, fantasy, science fiction, and mystery novels, including the *Arrow Series*, and stories for *Ebony Jr.*, *Essence*, *Boy's Life*, *Espionage*, *Black World*, *Scholastic*, and *Black Creation*, has settled his earlier doubts that being a writer is a worthwhile profession.

Critic's Corner

In the tradition of his father, grandfather, and generations of black griots, Myers has established his skill as a master storyteller. He won the Council on Interracial Books for Children writing contest and was published in *Parents Magazine* under his working name. After his confidence improved, he received the Woodward Park School award, the Child Study Association of America book of the year, Edgar Allan Poe runner-up, Parents Choice award, New Jersey Institute of Technology Authors award, five ALA citations, five Coretta Scott King awards, a *Parenting Magazine* award, a Notable Children's Trade Book in Social Studies citation, and a Newbery honor listing. Topol Productions filmed his humorous novel, *The Young Landlords*.

In 1994, Myers reached the height of his writing success. He earned a Margaret A. Edwards Award for lifetime achievement and received a sixth Coretta Scott King award, ALA Notable Children's Book, and a New York Public Library Books for the Teen Age citation. In 1997, the string of honors continued with a *Boston Globe-Horn Book* citation and a seventh Coretta Scott King award. The next year, he researched the background of the first major slave court battle and produced *Amistad*. By early 2000, he had added four more titles to his lengthy canon, and received the dubious honor of becoming a frequently censored author.

After 30 years of producing quality young adult literature, Myers' *Monster* won him a Michael L. Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature. For the audio version from Listening Library, he received the 2000 Audio Earphones Award. He also won a *Boston Globe-Horn Book* Awards for Excellence in Children's Literature for *145th Street*.

Other Works by Walter Dean Myers

145th Street: Short Stories (2000)
Adventure in Granada (1985)
Ambush in the Amazon (1986)
Amistad: A Long Road to Freedom (1998)
Angel to Angel: A Mother's Gift of Love (1998)
At Her Majesty's Request (1999)
Autobiography of My Dead Brother (2005)
Bad Boy: A Memoir (2001)
The Beast (2003)
The Black Pearl and the Ghost; or, One Mystery after Another (1980)

Brainstorm (1977)
Brown Angels (1993)
Crystal (1987)
The Dancers (1972)
Dangerous Games (1993)
The Dragon Takes a Wife (1972)
The Dream Bearer (2003)
Duel in the Desert (1986)
Fashion by Tasha (1993)
Fly, Jimmy, Fly (1974)
Fallen Angels (1988)
Fast Sam, Cool Clyde, and Stuff (1975)
Glorious Angels: A Celebration of Children (1995)
The Golden Serpent (1980)
The Greatest: Muhammad Ali (2001)
Handbook for Boys: A Novel (2002)
Harlem (1997)
Harlem Hellfighters (2006)
The Hidden Shrine (1985)
Hoops (1981)
How Mr. Monkey Saw the Whole World (1996)
Intensive Care (1993)
It Ain't All for Nothin' (1978)
Jazz (2006)
The Journal of Biddy Owens, the Negro Leagues (2000)
Journal of Joshua Loper, A Black Cowboy (1999)
Journal of Scott Pendleton Collins, a WWII Soldier (1999)
The Legend of Tarik (1981)
Malcolm X: By Any Means Necessary (1993)
Me, Mop, and the Moondance Kid (1988)
Mojo and the Russians (1977)
Mop, Moondance, and the Nagasaki Knights (1992)
Motown and Didi: A Love Story (1984)
Mr. Monkey and the Gotcha Bird (1984)
The Nicholas Factor (1983)
Now Is Your Time (1991)
One More River to Cross (1995)
The Outside Shot (1984)
Patrol: An American Soldier in Vietnam (2002)
A Place Called Heartbreak: A Story of Vietnam (1992)
Remember Us Well (1993)
The Righteous Revenge of Artemis Bonner (1992)
Scorpions (1988)
The Shadow of Red Moon (1987)
Shooter (2004)
Slam! (1996)
Smiffy Blue: Ace Crime Detective (1996)
Social Welfare (1976)
Somewhere in the Darkness (1992)
The Story of the Three Kingdoms (1995)
Street Love (2006)
Sweet Illusions (1986)
Tales of a Dead King (1983)

The Test (1993)
Three Swords for Granada (2002)
Toussaint L'Ouverture: The Fight for Haiti's Freedom (1996)
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Won't Know Till I Get There (1982)
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General Objectives

1. To understand the impact of crime on neighborhoods
2. To account for faulty selection of friends
3. To interpret social and community attitudes toward criminals
4. To contrast the outlook and stability of the accused
5. To discuss the themes of incarceration and accusations
6. To recount the main events in the crime
7. To particularize the demands of a court appearance
8. To describe attitudes and behaviors during tense moments
9. To describe elements of atmosphere and tone
10. To analyze flashbacks as sources of information

Specific Objectives

1. To explain Steve's connection with felony murder
2. To analyze the symbolism of Steve's screenplay
3. To account for George Sawicki's testimony
4. To express the importance of making a good impression on the jury
5. To justify the use of hostile witnesses and police informants
6. To predict how Steve will function in the neighborhood after his release
7. To characterize Kathy O'Brien and Asa Briggs as defense attorneys
8. To discuss the implications of the crime photos and chalk marks
9. To summarize the roles of judge, jury, witnesses, and victim
10. To list dismaying events caused by suspicion, judgments, and violent cell mates
11. To characterize events that cause Steve to doubt himself
12. To analyze details that contribute to courtroom tension

Literary Terms and Applications

For a better understanding of Walter Dean Myers' fiction, present the following terms and applications:

Episode: a coherent event, digression, or incident in a narrative or serial that stands out on its own merit, in particular, Steve's conversations with James King and Steve's casual assault on a bystander with a rock. The neighborhood association of a naive teenager like Steve with career criminals like James King and Bobo Evans leads to suspicion that Steve served as their lookout at the drugstore robbery and murder. Adding to the incrimination of Steve is the single incident in which he strikes a young woman with a rock, then allows blame to pass to his friend Tony.

Characterization: the creation of full-fledged human motivation, behavior, and response in fictional people. Myers insinuates ambiguity in the description of Steve Harmon, who is young and innocent, but not free of guilt by association. Because he frequents settings that put him in contact with gang members and drug dealers, he taints his reputation and causes his father to doubt the boy's values. Even though the court exonerates Steve, he still must re-establish himself and his worth with family and friends.

First Person Narrative: a story or a series of actions told from the vantage point of a single observer inside the action. By limiting the point of view to Steve, the author expresses the terror of jail and the longing for acceptance that cause Steve serious angst after the trial ends in his favor. Changed by jail time with dangerous men and cynical guards, he recognizes that life in prison would push him to the edge and lead to suicide. To restore his sanity and optimism, he reverts to plotting films of Harlem community life, which allow him to investigate neighborhood behaviors without endangering his person or reputation.

Themes and Motifs

Themes

- immaturity
- amorality
- separation
- questioning
- incarceration
- threats

- victimization
- trial
- family love
- exoneration

Motifs

- coping with career criminals
- seeking self-esteem
- studying life through cinematography
- comprehending the need for courage
- longing for self-esteem

Meaning Study

Below are significant words, phrases, or sentences from the novel. Explain each in context. Date and page numbers pinpoint each entry so that you can re-read the passage where it appears.

1. I'll call it what the lady who is the prosecutor called me. MONSTER. (Introduction, p. 5)
(In a criminal trial, the prosecutor represents the state of New York in bringing charges of felony murder against two suspects. Sandra Petrocelli, the assistant district attorney, must prove to the jury that Steve Harmon was the lookout in the robbery that cost drugstore owner Alguinaldo Nesbitt his life. To impress on jurors the seriousness of the crime, she differentiates between the innocent immigrant who ran the drugstore and the young thugs who killed him in a botched holdup.)
2. Fade in: Interior: Early morning in Cell Block D, Manhattan Detention Center. (July 6, p. 7)
(Steve chooses to move into and out of scenes of his experience as though he were directing the filming of a documentary rather than living the hopeless existence of a suspect incarcerated for felony murder. A fade-in slowly focuses on a scene that he considers crucial to the story.)
3. Voice-over (VO) Ain't no use putting the blanket over your head, man. You can't cut this out; this is reality. (July 6, p. 8)
(Steve enhances settings and actions with voices of male prisoners who comment on Steve's reaction to incarceration and a criminal trial. They force him to stop trying to escape and to face the reality of a charge that may cost him his freedom or his life.)
4. Film workshop at Stuyvesant High School. (July 6, p. 18)
(Peter Stuyvesant, for whom Steve's high school is named, was the Dutch governor of New York until English forces edged him out of power in 1664, turning the colony over to a new government.)

5. But there are also monsters in our communities—people who are willing to steal and to kill, people who disregard the rights of others. (July 6, p. 21)
(In her initial presentation to the jury, Sandra Petrocelli polarizes the figures in the case into two categories—upstanding citizens and monsters. The term so traumatizes Steve that it remains with him to the end, causing him to weigh his worth as a person, to ponder suicide rather than serve twenty years in prison, and to long for acceptance by his parents and defense attorney.)
6. He held up a check-cashing place and shot the guard. (July 9, p. 89)
(In poor neighborhoods like the projects of Harlem, people who handle their money in cash rely on check-cashing facilities rather than depositing funds in bank accounts. Because criminals know that these businesses supply staff with cash to operate, they target check-cashing facilities on payday for easy heists.)
7. I used to think of you going to Morehouse and doing the same things I did when I was there. (July 9, pp. 111-112)
(Begun in 1867 as Augusta Institute in the basement of Springfield Baptist Church in Augusta, Georgia, Morehouse College, the nation's only historically black, all-male, four-year, liberal arts institution, relocated in Atlanta and offered a full academic program in arts, humanities, science, engineering, and business. It is the home of the Journal of Negro History and Morehouse Research Institute.)
8. Camera pans. Homeless men have built a cardboard "village" on rooftops. (July 9, p. 117)
(Steve's fictional camera pans the neighborhood, making visual comment on the homeless, who live precariously on roofs in cardboard shelters. Added to his images of young boys mixing with gang members and drug dealers, the screenplay depicts the down side to living in Harlem.)
9. I think he from St. Kitts. (July 9, p. 119)
(The independent Caribbean island of St. Kitts, which severed its relationship with Britain in 1983, takes its name from Christopher Columbus, the voyager who first encountered the island late in the 15th century. Most of the island's population are descendants of slaves imported to the Western Hemisphere.)
10. Four-way SPLIT-SCREEN MONTAGE: Three images alternate between shots of witnesses and defendants. (July 10, p. 131)
(Steve's split-image presentation suggests the reader's difficulties in coordinating conflicting and contradictory testimony by a

group of witnesses. Some evidence, such as testimony of Steve's relationship with James King and Bobo Evans, indicates guilt. Other testimonies make no connection between Steve and the crime or criminals.)

Cross-Curricular Sources

Novels

James Baldwin, *If Beale Street Could Talk*
Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Crime and Punishment*
Lois Duncan, *Killing Mr. Griffin*
Ernest J. Gaines, *A Lesson Before Dying*
S. E. Hinton, *The Outsiders*

Plays

Reginald Rose, *Twelve Angry Men*

Nonfiction

Truman Capote, *In Cold Blood*
Nancy Day, *The Death Penalty for Teens*
A. E. Sadler, *Juvenile Crime* (Opposing Viewpoints)

Internet

ACLU Death Penalty Campaign
www.aclu.org/death-penalty/
Death Penalty Focus
www.deathpenalty.org/
Methods of Execution
www.agitator.com/dp/methods/

Videos/DVDs

A Lesson Before Dying
Twelve Angry Men

The Importance of Setting

Monster contrasts the courtroom with jailing at the Manhattan Detention Center, both terrifying experiences for 16-year-old Steve Harmon. Distancing himself from both by pretending to film the events of his trial for complicity in felony murder, he pours out his terror at living in a jail cell since December with cynical criminals and at trying to eat and sleep amid menacing sounds in the night. His awareness of gang rape, assault, and threats of violence unnerve him, causing him to weep and tremble and to rely on visits from his parents for support. He loses his appetite and is unable to use the toilet while others watch. In the visitation room, he is unable to touch his father's hand without causing guards to react to physical contact with outsiders.

In court, the crisply authoritative workings of jury empanelment and swearing in of witnesses and the casual post-July Fourth welcome of the judge contrast the matter-of-fact shackling to the U-bolt in the bench and Steve's lowering of his head to the table in despair. Seated before his parents and alongside cynical guards, Steve is isolated and paired with James King, the most villainous of the three defendants. His link to his defense attorney, Kathy O'Brien, by the turn of a cup on the table helps him to shape his testimony to her wishes.

Beyond these two milieus, Steve moves more freely in flashbacks of film club, home scenes with his 11-year-old brother Jerry and his mother, lectures on film by George Sawicki, and casual neighborhood activities. The novel stresses that it is Harlem itself that exposes Steve to crack dealers, "getovers," and gangs like the Diablos, all unfit influences. Through the film club's camera, Steve examines all the influences of his world and seeks through cinematography an understanding of the hostile environment that brings him close to a life sentence for murder.

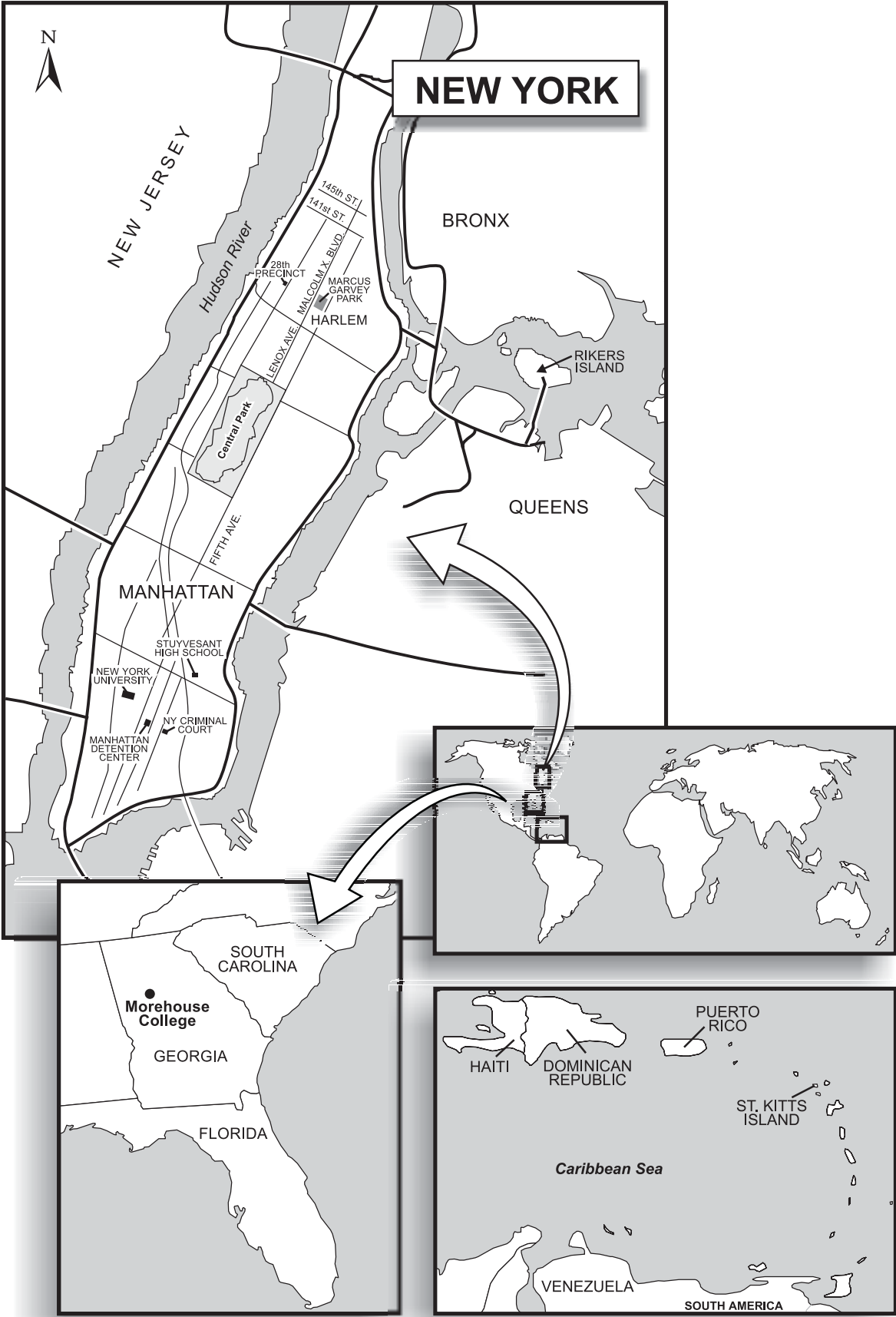
Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers with quotations from the novel.

Motivation

1. What causes Steve to cry at night?
(The lurid atmosphere of the Manhattan Detention Center weighs heavily on 16-year-old Steve Harmon, who is scared all the time. He is unable to eat or use the toilet and doesn't recognize his own face in the mirror. The stress of survivalism is never-ending in prison, especially when the lights are out. In the opening statement, he describes his reaction when "someone is being beaten up and screaming for help." The noise covers Steve's sniffling, which could lead to a beating for showing weakness.)

To typify the daily atmosphere, Steve characterizes the constant need for prisoners "to hurt each other." He describes his observation as feeling "like I have walked into the middle of a movie." On a subsequent night, he suffers a terrifying dream of a court appearance and "trying to ask questions and nobody could hear me." He fears that he might attract attention by shouting out in his sleep. He worries about making himself vulnerable by revealing his nightmare: "That would look weak to everybody. It's not good to be weak in here.")



Setting

2. Describe visitation.

(On July 9 Steve passes through a tunnel to sit at a hexagonal table in the visitors' area of the Manhattan Detention Center. Dressed in orange prison uniform, he faces his father on the opposite site of the table. The exchange is tense as Steve insists that he "didn't do anything wrong." As Mr. Harmon expresses high hopes for his older son, he touches Steve to console him. A guard pulls Mr. Harmon's hand away, causing him to sob on departure with other visitors.)

The following Saturday, July 11, Steve describes the visit of Mrs. Harmon. On her first talk with her older son after the unexpected arrest at home by detectives Karyl and Williams, she tries to explain why she hasn't come sooner. Weeping in front of Steve, she sits in a crowded, noisy visitors' room at a table 18 inches wide. She tries to speak softly with him to create a sense of privacy, but she is unable to hear him. She presents Steve a Bible that the guards search and surreptitiously touches his hand before a guard intervenes.)

Character Development

3. How does Petrocelli discredit Mr. Sawicki's testimony?

(George Sawicki, sponsor of the film club, holds Steve in high regard for the honesty of his coverage of life in Harlem during the past three years. Sawicki describes Steve as outstanding, talented, bright, and compassionate. He states that Steve is "very much involved with depicting his neighborhood and environment in a positive manner." To Kathy O'Brien's questions, Sawicki declares Steve an honest young man.)

When Sandra Petrocelli, the prosecuting attorney for the state of New York, challenges the testimony, she notes that Sawicki sympathizes with his students, but does not live in Harlem. She states that the film club sponsor cannot know Steve's neighborhood from first-person experience. Sawicki declares that "to make an honest film, one has to be an honest person." Petrocelli notes that Sawicki likes Steve and drops the questioning at that point. Her concluding remark implies that Sawicki would lie to gain an acquittal for Steve.)

Historical Milieu

4. How does the story fit an historical era?

(Published in 1999, Walter Dean Myers' Monster reflects public outrage at a rise in juvenile violence. In an era that saw more underage felons tried for murder, theft, sexual assault, possession of weapons, and drug dealing, public opinion hardened against young thugs who shot schoolmates in classrooms, bullied and killed much younger children, and participated in thefts, arson, weapons violations, and drug running with full knowledge that laws were lenient toward underage perpetra-

tors. From the beginning of the trial, Kathy O'Brien tries to make Steve appear clean-cut, innocent, and unfortunately linked to a heinous crime that took the life of an immigrant drugstore owner who was killed with the pistol he bought to protect himself from Harlem hoodlums.)

The prosecution takes another tack by implying the thoughtlessness of young criminals in murdering their victims. To spotlight the needless killing of a good man, Sandra Petrocelli sums up the futility of the crime: "This was a botched robbery in which the perpetrators actually took very little money and a few cartoons of cigarettes. And, oh, yes, the life of a good man, Alguinaldo Nesbitt.")

Theme

5. What does Steve learn about making poor choices?

(By admitting his attraction to swaggering thugs like Bob Evans and James King, Steve places himself at Marcus Garvey Park chatting with criminals who talk idly about victimizing illegal aliens. Steve listens to plans for a drugstore heist to fatten James King's empty wallet. King says of his condition, "I need to put together a payroll crew. Get my pockets fat. F-A-T." Of his intentions, he asserts to Steve, "I got a sure getover.")

While watching television and eating cereal with 11-year-old Jerry, Steve suddenly finds himself a suspect in a drugstore heist and felony murder. Plunged into the seamy underworld of jail, he weeps quietly into his pillow at night and quickly acclimates to the slang and jail cynicism that give him clues on how to act. At the forefront of his worries, he realizes that this milieu could be his home for twenty years. Flashbacks to his casual acquaintance with criminals suggest that he rues his association with them and must distance himself from them in court if he is to succeed in convincing the jury of his innocence.)

Interpretation

6. What does Myers indicate about a criminal's attitude?

(Walter Dean Myers carefully delineates between Steve's curiosity about all phases of life in the Harlem projects and the devious manipulation of thugs like Bobo Evans and James King. By setting up the character of Steve, the film maker, as a foil, Myers presents the case of an inexperienced, impressionable teen confronting a harsh, self-absorbed mindset that has no qualms about victimizing illegal aliens or of conspiring to commit a robbery for cash. On one hand, Steve is curious about all aspects of life in Harlem, including the lives of homeless men living in cardboard shelters and the murder of a little girl two months before the drugstore hold-up. Faced with the amorality of King and Evans, Steve realizes the danger of associating with hardened criminals.)

Conflict

7. What does this coming to knowledge cost Steve?

(Although the court exonerates Steve Harmon for lack of evidence that he served as James King and Bobo Evans' lookout, being found not guilty does not end the nightmare of associating with thugs, arrest, questioning by detectives Karyl and Williams at the 28th precinct, incarceration, and trial. Freed of fantasies of death row or suicide in his cell, he reaches toward Kathy O'Brien to embrace and thank her for defending him, but finds her cold and unsympathetic toward him.)

Restored to loving parents, Steve returns home and delights his mother by sharing his camera with Jerry. Steve's safety once more reassures his mother, but Mr. Harmon remains unconvinced. To Steve's dismay, the father "is no longer sure of who I am." The distance between father and son grows out of the fact that Steve does "[know] people like King or Bobo or Osvaldo." Unsure of himself, Steve stares in the mirror to determine his true identity.)

Atmosphere

8. How do photos influence the story?

(Like Steve's documentary films, the crime photographer's murder scene snapshots influence the way that the jurors perceive James King, Bobo Evans, Osvaldo Cruz, and Steve Harmon. Detective Williams testifies to chalking the perimeter of Alguinaldo Nesbitt's corpse "to show the position [he] found it in." He explains the purpose of having it photographed in place so he could turn the victim over and continue the investigation of the underside.)

Of Sandra Petrocelli's use of the photos, Steve notes on Friday, July 10th, "She brought up the photographs again and made sure that the jury saw them a second time" as an end-of-the-week influence on the jurors' thoughts until their return on Monday. Steve admits, "The photos were bad, real bad." He realizes that they captured Nesbitt, who "[lay] there knowing he was going to die." With a child's curiosity, Steve wonders "if it hurt much." He switches to a mental image of himself walking down the street outside the drugstore as he turns his own mind into a "blank screen.")

Author Purpose

9. Why does Myers include images of Steve going to his execution?

(In an era that saw the rise of public outcry against the death penalty for its unfair application to minorities, retardates, and the insane, Myers stresses Steve's haplessness in making friends with criminals and his terror of being put to death. In a flashback that interrupts the sadistic questioning of detectives Karyl and Williams, Steve reacts to their scare tactics by imagining

himself walking down death row between two guards. By picturing himself strapped on a table awaiting lethal injection, Myers emphasizes the total helplessness of a victim of society's vengeance. The author exaggerates the dehumanization of Steve by depicting the guards brutally plugging his anus "so you don't mess yourself as you die." The savagery and inevitability of Steve's fantasy execution heighten the insouciance of two investigators who appear not to have looked for fingerprints. To impress on the court the improprieties of the police study of a crime scene, Asa Briggs accuses them of slipshod methods in choosing "to skip the investigation and run to your stoolies.")

Structure

10. What does the impression of a screenplay add to the novel?

(Steve distances himself from his own predicament by re-creating it as a screenplay for one of his documentary films. By using terms like voice-over, fade in, interior, cut to, and point of view, he implies a freedom to move into and out of a film record of his arrest, questioning, incarceration, and trial for serving as the lookout for robbers and murderers. With a childish lack of control, he splashes "Monster!" at the top of the title page, "just like the opening credits of the movie Star Wars." He supplies a self-pitying subtitle, "The Story of My Miserable Life," and identifies himself as star, producer, and director.)

The introduction suggests the value of the experience to Steve, who learns from a "few events" that turn his life around. Traumatized at Petrocelli's naming him one of three monster criminals, Steve continues to film himself in the mirror after his acquittal. As though choosing film as a means of understanding culpability, he gazes at himself "a thousand times to look for one true image." Myers concludes the novel without answering Steve's question about Kathy O'Brien's perception: "What did she see?")

How Language Works

Myers contrasts the educated language of legal professionals with the street lingo of Harlem criminals. The juxtaposition illustrates the chasm that separates life in Manhattan and Queens from Steve's existence in a crime-ridden neighborhood in the Harlem projects. For example:

1. After Steve rolls the credits of his screenplay, he depicts a fellow criminal, Sunset, tossing out a remark about the morning of the trial: "He up for the big one. I know how that feels."
2. Kathy O'Brien, Steve's defender, speaks plainly of the danger of losing the trial: "Both you

and this King character are on trial for felony murder. Felony murder is as serious as it gets. . . They're pushing for the death penalty, which is really bad."

3. The crass attitudes of court officials indicate a carelessness with human feelings and lives. The stenographer confides to the guard, "I hope this case lasts two weeks. I can sure use the money."
4. The 60-year-old judge, his attention split between the morning's business and the past weekend, remarks, "You can bring up your motions relative to that ruling this afternoon or if there's a break. Hope everyone had a good Fourth of July?"
5. Sandra Petrocelli, an all-business assistant district attorney for the state of New York, focuses the jury's attention with the claim, "There are also monsters in our community—people who are willing to steal and to kill, people who disregard the rights of others."
6. Bobo Evans, James King's accomplice, negates the seriousness of crime with his slangy discussion of murder: "I asked King what happened, and he said he had to light him up because he was trying to muscle him."
7. In conversation with a cellmate, Steve hears one inmate remark, "You in the system, you needs to get out the system." The second speaker remarks, "Only truth I know is I don't want to be in there with you ugly dudes."
8. Steve, the naive newcomer to criminal thinking, insists, "Truth is truth. It's what you know to be right."

Across the Curriculum

Art

1. Design contrasting murals or posters to demonstrate these paired actions: Steve throwing a rock at a woman in the park/the jury looking bored, O'Brien turning a cup upside down/Evans selling stolen cigarettes, Steve mopping the jail corridor/Mr. Harmon sobbing, Petrocelli calling the killers monsters/George Sawicki testifying to Steve's honesty, James King glaring at witnesses/Steve chained to a U-bolt, and

Jerry on the street below Steve's cell/Williams and Karyl taking Steve from his home for questioning.

2. Sketch cells for a documentary filmstrip on a felony murder trial. Include the roles of judge, medical examiner, guards, court clerk, court stenographer, defense attorneys, prosecutor, witnesses, detectives, jury foreman, crime photographer, and jurors.

Business and Economics

1. Describe the types of work that normal people do in Harlem, including clerking at the drugstore, questioning suspects at the precinct headquarters, working at a library, and doing day work. Explain why Petrocelli emphasizes George Sawicki's lack of experience with student's lives in Harlem.
2. Chart in dollars and cents the annual income of a drugstore owner, drugstore employee, school teacher, librarian, crime-scene photographer, drug dealer, prison guard, police detective, medical examiner, judge, prosecutor, van driver, court clerk, and defense attorney. Estimate the amount Kathy O'Brien and Asa Briggs might charge for defending Steve and King during a two-week trial for felony murder. Why might the two charges differ for a teenager with no previous record and a career criminal?
3. Make a list of standard items needed in a courtroom, including gavel, stenotype machine, Bible, records, tables and chairs, portrait of George Washington, restraints and handcuffs for criminals, prison uniforms, bench with U-bolt, and sidearms for guards. Explain why security devices help law enforcers reduce risk of reprisals. Summarize how these items increase the cost of a murder trial.

Cinema

1. Propose a film biography of Walter Dean Myers. Outline scenes that Steve could compose and shoot verifying Myers' research on the themes and actions of the novel *Monster*, including lineups, prison vans, chalked lines at the crime scene, photos of victims, and juvenile suspects handcuffed and questioned by police detectives.

2. View films with characters accused of crimes, such as *Dead Man Walking* and *A Lesson Before Dying*. Compare the movies' settings, themes, and dialogue to those of *Monster*.

Drama

1. Role-play the part of a doctor, detective, news reporter, undertaker, club mentor, Nesbitt family member, grief counselor, security guard, school counselor, witness, preacher, cell mate, and family friend of the Harmons. Explain how the story would change if Steve admitted in his notebook that he regrets acting as the robbers' lookout.
2. Draw stage settings for a dramatization of different scenes from the novel. Supply sketches of costumes and props.
3. Pantomime the abnormal personality traits and behaviors of King and Evans, particularly their behaviors during the planning and execution of the crime and the subsequent trial. Determine why Osvaldo Cruz fears them and why Steve wants to be tough like them.

Geography

1. Use topographical maps to describe St. Kitts, the island home of Aguinaldo Nesbitt, and Morehouse, the college that Mr. Harmon chooses for Steve. Contrast these settings with Lenox Avenue and park scenes in Harlem.
2. Explain why Harlem has a boulevard named for Malcolm X and a park honoring Marcus Garvey. Propose other black leaders and role models who deserve recognition.
3. Make a web site or bulletin board that identifies these places: New York University, Marcus Garvey Park, Lenox Avenue, Malcolm X Boulevard, Riker's Island, Morehouse College, St. Kitts, Queens, Harlem, Manhattan Detention Center, 145th Street, 141st Street, and Greenhaven. Append a scale of miles to indicate relative distances between points, particularly between Harlem and either Riker's Island, St. Kitts, New York University, or Morehouse.

History and Social Studies

1. Compose an extended definition of social isolation. Explain why the term describes Steve

before, during, and after the trial. As Karyl leads Steve away toward precinct headquarters, why does Mrs. Harmon's flight to the street seem futile? How do George Sawicki, Jerry, and Mrs. Harmon demonstrate their love and acceptance? Why do Kathy O'Brien's rebuff and Mr. Harmon's distance trouble Steve?

2. Explain a chart, web site, or poster on the theme of the nuclear family. Give reasons for the novel's inclusion of Steve's position as the family's elder son as well as his fascination with tough guys like James King and Bobo Evans and members of the Diablos like Osvaldo Cruz. Propose implications of the absence of family supporting King, Evans, and Cruz.
3. Compose an extended definition of parent. Suggest ways that people like the Harmons can support youngsters accused of serious crimes, for example, by visiting, sending letters, providing respectable clothes for trial appearances, wearing brave faces during testimony, and displaying confidence during interviews with law officers and the media.
4. Research details on the job of prison guards, especially their duty to protect inmates from assault and gang rape. Outline the most complete data from Internet, book, magazine, and newspaper sources. Summarize qualifications for the job, including skill with firearms and martial arts and experience in law enforcement.
5. Based on your understanding of the novel, lead a panel discussion of the effects of physical endangerment, rough neighborhoods, local crime, jailing, and exposure to youthful offenders on teens like Steve. Support your opinions with facts from census reports, sociological surveys, and statistics obtained from almanacs and economic and health surveys.

Language Arts

1. Record aloud descriptive passages from *Monster*. Consider night sounds in nearby cells, dressing for trial appearances, talking with other prisoners about the fairness of sentencing, reviewing Nesbitt's death, discrediting witnesses, and James King's courtroom

behavior. Explain why Asa Briggs is unlikely to put King on the stand and why Kathy O'Brien wants to distance Steve from criminals like King, Bob Evans, and Wendell Bolden.

2. Post a mural or web site expressing the importance of these terms to the novel: affidavit, crime-scene photographer, parole, lethal injection, death row, perpetrator, prosecutor, fade in, voice-over, POV, defense attorney, felony murder, U-bolt, suppress testimony, B&E, possession with intent, green card, pertinent, Stuyvesant, podium, glossaries, hostile witness, Queens, Morehouse, cacophony, pans, Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, conspiracy, cut to, redress, reasonable doubt, accomplice, articulate, martial arts, black belt, Rudy Giuliani, precinct, split-screen montage, homicide, trapezius, bid whist, star witness, pretrial hearing, lineup, sidebar, prejudicial, overrule, attaché case, hurdy-gurdy, concentric circles, soliciting an argument, indulgence, sexually molested, Stuart portrait of George Washington, and karate.
3. Write a scene in which King or Evans goes free and meets Steve in Marcus Garvey Park to settle old scores. Determine how Steve will rid himself of criminal friends, regain his family's trust, and continue making movies for Mr. Sawicki and the film club.
4. Suggest alternate titles to the novel. Discuss in a paragraph why Myers selected "monster" as a term to unsettle a sensitive, naive teen like Steve. Determine whether the title fits Sunset, Wendell Bolden, Sal Zinzi, Peaches, Johnny, Tony, Osvaldo Cruz, James King, and Bobo Evans.
5. Divide the class into small groups to study the Bible passage that Mrs. Harmon marks for Steve. Explain why people often turn to David's Psalms for solace during difficult times. Select other lines from the Psalms that Steve might find comforting, for example, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help."
6. Analyze the types of characters who participate in the trial. Contrast various behaviors with Steve's nervousness and despair. Explain why Kathy O'Brien's brave demeanor, James

King's glowers, the Harmons' support, Asa Briggs' cross-examination, and Sandra Petrocelli's cockiness work to Steve's advantage.

7. Draw a cause-and-effect diagram illustrating how a straightforward robbery turns into murder. Explain why Kathy O'Brien hinges her defense on the fact that the lookout did a poor job of protecting the robbers. Comment on the irony that Alguinaldo Nesbitt was shot with the chrome pistol he bought to protect himself from criminals.
8. Draw a Venn diagram contrasting the behaviors and attitudes of Steve Harmon, Osvaldo Cruz, James King, Bobo Evans, Sal Zinzi, Sunset, and Wendell Bolden. Determine why Steve seems young and vulnerable in the presence of hardened criminals.
9. Compose a web site introducing young readers to other crime fiction, including Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*, Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*, Reginald Rose's *Twelve Angry Men*, Ellen Raskin's *The Westing Game*, Lois Duncan's *Killing Mr. Griffin*, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, and Susan Glaspell's *Trifles*.

Law

1. Read aloud a definition of reasonable doubt. Explain why Steve profits from so little evidence of his part in the conspiracy, crime, and sharing of the proceeds. Discuss reasons why jurors would vote to exonerate him of the charge of felony murder, robbery, and conspiracy. Summarize any testimony that you believe proves him guilty of complicity.
2. Improve a booklet or web site explaining how to cope with apprehension and questioning by police detectives at precinct headquarters. Suggest ways Steve's parents could have spared him jail time and exposure to career criminals, for example, through release to their custody or to a juvenile facility.
3. Explain in a brief class presentation the difference between finding Steve innocent and exonerating him of connection with the crime. Comment on Myers' reason for leaving doubt in the reader's mind about Steve's guilt.

Psychology

1. Explain with a character web the need for counseling for young criminals and gang members like the Diablos, James King, Bobo Evans, and Osvaldo Cruz. Suggest questions that need answers: why Steve wants to be tough, what Osvaldo gains by obeying bullies, how Sal Zinzi profits from making deals with authorities to testify about the stolen cigarettes, how membership in the film club helps Steve observe his world objectively through a camera, why Johnny and Peaches seem to admire James King, and why Tony wants to kill people with an uzi.
2. Explain to a small group the obvious and subtle changes in Steve and his family. Discuss why his parents try to keep up a brave front and how family unity shifts after Steve is exonerated and returns to the film club. Discuss the difference between wanting to be liked and approved and deserving the regard of others. Summarize your own opinion of Steve's wrongdoing and need for self-esteem.
3. Draw a flow chart displaying the effects of extended juvenile incarceration on friendships, family relationships, conversation, trust, work, sleep, health, appetite, neighborhood relations, police work, the media, and community life.

Science and Health

1. Join a research group to determine the causes, symptoms, and prevention of suicide. Emphasize modern methods of protecting depressed prisoners from killing themselves, including limiting the types of clothes and shoes they wear and the furnishing of their jail cells, providing counseling and group therapy, and surveying cells through closed-circuit television cameras.
2. Draw a human lung and explain why a shot to the trapezius causes Alguinaldo Nesbitt to drown in his own blood.

Speech

1. Organize a discussion of criminal behavior. Explain why Steve deserves some of the blame for fraternizing with members of the Diablos, throwing a rock that hit a bystander, and mixing with drug dealers and petty crim-

- inals like James King and Bobo Evans. Determine what part of the guilt belongs to the Harmons for living in a crime-ridden section of Harlem.
2. Compose a formal presentation on trust. Explain why Steve longs for the approval and acceptance of his father and of Kathy O'Brien. Summarize his own refusal to rid himself of guilt.
 3. Deliver a brief chalk talk on the fairness of court trials for juveniles like Steve. Comment on orange prison uniforms, the defense attorney's preparations for trial, use of lineups and identification of photos, the U-bolt securing Steve to the bench, and armed guards watching his every move. Predict how Steve will react to future encounters with criminals like Bobo Evans, Osvaldo Cruz, and James King.

Alternate Assessment

1. List and describe crimes committed by characters.
2. Outline frames of a documentary film to express to George Sawicki the atmosphere in which Steve lives. Compile a list of actions that demonstrate the lifestyle of the Harlem projects.
3. Compose a scene in which Steve and Jerry Harmon discuss the hazards of friendship with criminals and the likelihood that Jerry might suffer the same humiliation and terror of incarceration at Manhattan Detention Center. Give Jerry advice that Steve received from Sunset and other jailed men.
4. Make a character list and explain the relationship of each to Steve.
5. Describe the use of candid photos illustrating emotional scenes from the novel. Suggest additional shots of Steve shaking hands with Kathy O'Brien, departing his cell for the last time, returning to Stuyvesant High School, showing club members films of life in the Harlem projects, and thanking George Sawicki for his testimony.

Vocabulary

Select words from the following list to fill in blanks in the sentences below.

admissible	cacophony	glossaries	lineup	terse
affidavit	causative	gullible	menacingly	trapezius
all-clear	chrome	hurdy-gurdy	molested	verge
alleged	concentric	implication	perpetrators	vouch
botched	conspiracy	indulgence	sidebar	whence
boulevard	contention	judicial	soliciting	whist
bravado	felony	lethal	surly	wrenched

1. They lay Steve on the table for the _____ injection and strap him down.
2. As camera zooms in, we pick up a _____ of sounds.
3. He's sitting there looking _____.
4. Although you want to _____ for his character, isn't it fair to say that you don't know what he does when he goes to his neighborhood and you go home to yours?
5. One looks terrified. The other is putting on a show of _____.
6. Objection! Unless the prosecutor is going to pass out _____ to the jury, I want her to use standard English.
7. I got some cigarettes from a guy who told me he was in on a drugstore robbery up on Malcolm X _____.
8. The _____ was that if he was nervous, it meant that he had something to hide.
9. It is the _____ of the state that no one has the right to deprive us of the precious gift of life.
10. This was a botched robbery in which the _____ actually took very little money and a few cartons of cigarettes.
11. His willingness to check out the store, no matter how poorly he did it, was one of those _____ factors that resulted in the death of Mr. Nesbitt.
12. Steve looks up and sees the taker looking at him _____.
13. I'm ruling the kid's testimony is _____.
14. The bullet finally lodged in the upper _____.
15. The smile that came to her lips was one she _____ from someplace deep inside her.

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Character Identification (30 points)

Match each of the following descriptions from the novel with a character name. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| _____ 1. emigrates to the United States and buys a business | A. Lorelle Henry |
| _____ 2. worries about a granddaughter's illness | B. James Moody |
| _____ 3. no longer owns a cheap lamp | C. George Sawicki |
| _____ 4. receives a tip about stolen cigarettes | D. Gluck |
| _____ 5. marks a Bible passage | E. Steve |
| _____ 6. looks at his family in the street | F. Asa Briggs |
| _____ 7. wishes for an uzi | G. Detective Karyl |
| _____ 8. explains how the victim drowned in blood | H. Dorothy Moore |
| _____ 9. shares chicken with a criminal | I. George Nipping |
| _____ 10. overhears an incriminating conversation at Riker's Island | J. Bobo Evans |
| _____ 11. buys a glove | K. Mrs. Harmon |
| _____ 12. believes that Steve is honest | L. Alguinaldo Nesbitt |
| _____ 13. defends James King | M. Sal Zinzi |
| _____ 14. sobs after visitation | N. Tony |
| _____ 15. eats while questioning a suspect | O. Mr. Harmon |

Part II: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F if any part is false.

- _____ 1. Asa Briggs deliberately keeps his client off the witness stand.
- _____ 2. Steve anticipates getting a "taste" of the stolen money.
- _____ 3. Cigarettes found at the Manhattan Detention Center link Sunset to a felony.
- _____ 4. José Delgado discovered the crime shortly before the police arrived at 5:15.
- _____ 5. Wendell Bolden's testimony strengthens Kathy O'Brien's defense of Steve.
- _____ 6. Ernie accidentally locked himself into the crime scene and had to ask to be released.
- _____ 7. Steve envisions himself being prepared for lethal injection on death row.
- _____ 8. Allen Forbes testifies that Alguinaldo Nesbitt obtained a gun permit illegally.
- _____ 9. After three years in the film club, Steve has learned to see his life through the eye of the camera.
- _____ 10. Steve is happy to receive his parents' unconditional love and acceptance.

Comprehension Test A (Page 2)

Part III: Completion (20 points)

Fill in the blanks below with a word or phrase which completes the sentence. Place your answer in the space provided at left.

1. At the _____ center, Steve recalls hearing women discuss the victim, an immigrant from _____.
2. A neighbor reports that killers murdered a little girl _____ months before _____'s death.
3. While Steve watches the news on television, _____ and Williams arrive to take him to the 28th _____ headquarters for questioning.
4. Steve acknowledges that Kathy O'Brien ordered him not to write anything in his _____ that he didn't want _____ to see.
5. Lorelle Henry, a retired school _____ who witnessed the crime, picked out James King's _____ and identified him in a lineup.

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Describe what Steve learns from other inmates.
2. Explain why James King and Bobo Evans needed a lookout.
3. Compare the thoroughness of Kathy O'Brien, Sandra Petrocelli, Asa Briggs, and Detective Karyl.
4. Account for Steve's eagerness to appear tough.
5. Summarize events that hint at Steve's guilt.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Select the phrase that completes each of the following sentences. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- _____ 1. Kathy O'Brien insists that
- Asa Briggs force James King to testify.
 - she must turn the cup over.
 - Steve hold his head up.
 - the judge recess for the Fourth of July weekend.
- _____ 2. Sunset is the only person who
- reads the script.
 - expects a life sentence.
 - saw the lookout.
 - commands respect at breakfast after the fight.
- _____ 3. Steve claims that he was
- playing Superman with Jerry.
 - leaving Lenox Avenue on his way to school.
 - not the one who knifed a member of the Diablos.
 - making mental notes the day of the crime.
- _____ 4. At night, Steve
- lays out clothing to wear to court the next day.
 - hears the sounds of a sexual assault.
 - prays that he draws no more than seven years in prison.
 - whispers to cellmates about joining the Diablos by knifing a fellow member.
- _____ 5. Kathy O'Brien tells Steve
- about James King's past record of robberies and drug dealing.
 - of the judge's boredom with the case.
 - how to fool the jury into thinking he is innocent.
 - about life in Queens and graduation from New York University Law School.

- _____ 6. Steve receives
- a warning about not eating breakfast.
 - a Bible with a marked passage.
 - copies of the crime photographer's photos.
 - cigarettes but no money from the robbery.
- _____ 7. The judge rules
- on the use of slang in lawyers' questions.
 - that Steve does not have to be shackled to the U-bolt.
 - on whether James King has to take the stand.
 - that James King played ball left-handed.
- _____ 8. Asa Briggs believes that
- Bob Evans was at Riker's Island the day of the shooting.
 - José Delgado is lying about the time that he entered the drugstore.
 - Wendell Bolden saves himself jail time by accusing James King.
 - Osvaldo Cruz stole money out of fear of Bobo Evans and James King.
- _____ 9. Dorothy Moore testifies that
- James King had a job before Christmas.
 - her cousin has a driver's license.
 - she no longer has the gift lamp.
 - she doesn't want to implicate a black man in crime.
- _____ 10. Lorelle Henry went to the store
- to buy cough syrup for Tracy.
 - on the way to Harlem Hospital.
 - to identify the killer from a lineup of six men.
 - didn't recognize a face among 30 to 40 pictures.

Comprehension Test B (Page 2)

Part II: Matching (30 points)

Match the following actions with places from the list below. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| _____ 1. Wendell Bolden overhears information about a crime. | A. Manhattan Detention Center |
| _____ 2. Steve cries at night. | B. St. Kitts |
| _____ 3. Mr. Harmon didn't play football. | C. street outside the cell |
| _____ 4. The lookout allegedly stood on this street before a crime scene. | D. Greenhaven |
| _____ 5. Peaches and Johnny consider a "getover" against an illegal alien. | E. Morehouse |
| _____ 6. The homeless live in cardboard shelters. | F. courtroom |
| _____ 7. Steve watches the news. | G. 141st Street |
| _____ 8. Alguinaldo Nesbitt keeps a "chrome." | H. drugstore |
| _____ 9. A West Indian emigrates. | I. Riker's Island |
| _____ 10. Bobo Evans serves time for drug dealing. | J. rooftops |
| _____ 11. Detective Karyl eats while he questions Steve. | K. Harmon home |
| _____ 12. Steve looks down on Jerry. | L. film club |
| _____ 13. Steve is attached to a U-bolt. | M. Queens |
| _____ 14. George Sawicki teaches Steve about depicting reality. | N. 145th Street |
| _____ 15. Kathy O'Brien lives away from Harlem and the projects. | O. 28th precinct |

Part III: Short Answer (20 points)

Supply a word or phrase in answer to the following questions. Place your response in the blank provided.

- _____ 1. Whom does Kathy O'Brien accuse of "soliciting an argument"?
- _____ 2. At what age would Steve get out of prison if he served a 20-year sentence?
- _____ 3. From what island did Alguinaldo Nesbitt emigrate?
- _____ 4. What did Dr. James Moody find in the trapezius area?
- _____ 5. How does George Sawicki learn about Steve's neighborhood?
- _____ 6. What does the guard promise to get for Steve at Greenhaven?
- _____ 7. Who goes to a reformatory for car theft?
- _____ 8. Who warns Steve that he's young, black, and on trial?
- _____ 9. Whom does Bobo Evans call "the little Puerto Rican boy"?
- _____ 10. What does "dropped a dime" refer to?

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain how Steve visits with relatives at the jail.
2. Contrast the impressions that Osvaldo Cruz, James King, Bobo Evans, Sal Zinzi, and Wendell Bolden make on the jury.
3. Account for changes in Mr. Harmon's ambitions for his older son.
4. Summarize the events that precede the robbery and murder.
5. Characterize advice that Steve receives from fellow prisoners.

Answer Key

VOCABULARY

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. lethal | 9. contention |
| 2. cacophony | 10. perpetrators |
| 3. surly | 11. causative |
| 4. vouch | 12. menacingly |
| 5. bravado | 13. admissible |
| 6. glossaries | 14. trapezius |
| 7. Boulevard | 15. wrenched |
| 8. implication | |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Character Identification (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. L | 6. E | 11. I |
| 2. A | 7. N | 12. C |
| 3. H | 8. B | 13. F |
| 4. D | 9. J | 14. O |
| 5. K | 10. M | 15. G |

Part II: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. T |
| 2. F | 7. T |
| 3. F | 8. F |
| 4. T | 9. T |
| 5. F | 10. F |

Part III: Completion (20 points)

- detention, St. Kitts
- two, Nesbitt
- Karyl, precinct
- notebook, Petrocelli
- librarian, picture

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Multiple Choice (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. B |
| 2. A | 7. A |
| 3. D | 8. C |
| 4. B | 9. C |
| 5. D | 10. A |

Part II: Matching (30 points)

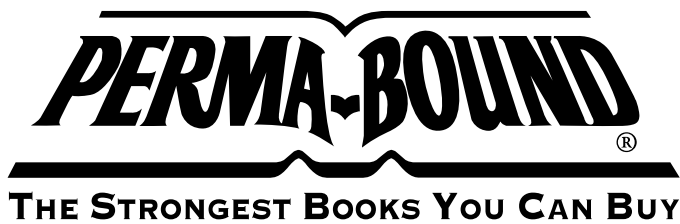
- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. I | 6. J | 11. O |
| 2. A | 7. K | 12. C |
| 3. E | 8. H | 13. F |
| 4. N | 9. B | 14. L |
| 5. G | 10. D | 15. M |

Part III: Short Answer (20 points)

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Petrocelli | 6. boyfriend |
| 2. 36 | 7. Osvaldo |
| 3. St. Kitts | 8. O'Brien |
| 4. bullet | 9. Osvaldo |
| 5. from film | 10. informing to the police |

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.



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